



# Story Elements in Film

## Suggested Responses

### Pre-viewing

1. *Animal Kingdom* – set in Melbourne in the late 1980s.  
*The Dressmaker* – set in outback Australia in the 1950s.
2. *Animal Kingdom* – Joshua “J” Cody played by James Frecheville. Janine “Smurf” Cody played by Jackie Weaver. Andrew “Pope” Cody played by Ben Mendelsohn. Detective Senior Sgt Nathan Leckie played by Guy Pearce.  
*The Dressmaker* – Tilly Dunnage played by Kate Winslet. Molly Dunnage played by Judy Davis. Teddy McSwiney played by Liam Hemsworth. Sergeant Horatio Farratt played by Hugo Weaving. Gertrude “Trudy” Pratt played by Sarah Snook.
3. *Animal Kingdom* – After the overdose of his mother, Joshua “J” Cody feels he has little choice but to contact his estranged grandmother, Janine “Smurf” Cody, the matriarch of a violent crime family. At just seventeen, J must navigate his survival among his violent criminal family, and negotiate his way through a corrupt police force, in a brutal world of crime and punishment, in order to find his place.  
*The Dressmaker* – After years working as a dressmaker for a number of fashion houses in Paris, Tilly returns home to the Australian outback in order to care for her mother. Tilly uses her talents, and her sense of style, to transform the women of the town and exact revenge on those who had cast her out of the community many years before.
4. *Animal Kingdom* – Fear, violence and power.  
*The Dressmaker* – Love, revenge, regret and reconciliation.

### Comprehension Questions

1. a) mise-en-scène b) acting c) camera techniques d) editing
2. crime drama.
3. Power/violence and fear. The themes of power and violence are introduced through the symbolic image of the lion. Fear is introduced through the character voice over, “I didn’t realise it at the time but they were all scared”.
4. Character voice over, “The crooks always come undone, always. One way or another.” We sense we are about to witness a tragedy unfold.
5. The film is a comedy drama.
6. The audience could expect to follow the development of characters’ relationships, and sometimes the introduction of new characters, as well as the creation of new narrative possibilities.
7. narrative resolution
8. The audience is left wondering if J will become the next Pope.
9. Cause and effect is a basic narrative function that drives the narrative forward. How characters react to events and the choices they make determine what events will follow.
10. Characters and character development are important elements in film as they foster emotional engagement with the audience. The audience is able to identify, empathise or be repulsed by the characters in the films they watch, and the audience is enticed to keep watching until the end.
11. The costumes and character relationships help to develop the characters in *The Dressmaker*.

continued...





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12. *Animal Kingdom* is considered to be a conventional narrative because the sequence of events unfold in a linear fashion.
13. Flashbacks are used to develop Tilly's character. The use of flashbacks helps the audience to understand her motivation, and to build dramatic tension as the mystery is solved.

### Terms and Effects

Story Element	Definition	Effect
Setting	Setting refers to the location and time period in which the story unfolds.	Creates context and establishes the world of the film for the audience.
Mise-en-scène	Everything that is within the frame of a camera shot.	The use of everything that is within the frame of a camera shot, such as elements of set design, position of props, use of colours and actors, creates different desired effects in order to convey meaning.
Editing	The arranging of film, video, photography, or text for a product or publication.	Creates different desired effects in order to convey meaning.
Genre	A way or mode of production that conforms to narrative and filmic conventions, as well as audience expectations.	Helps the audience to suspend belief once they recognise the conventions of a genre.
Narrative progression	The progression of the story through image, light and sound. Narrative progression refers to the opening sequence, narrative development and resolution.	Gives the film's story structure.
Cause and effect	Cause and effect is a basic narrative function that drives the narrative forward.	How characters react to events with the choices they make determines what events will follow.
Character	A character is a person or other being in a narrative work of art.	The audience is able to identify, empathise or be repulsed by the characters in the films we watch, enticing us to keep watching until the end.
Narrative possibilities	Different possible narratives are presented to the audience so that we may consider where the film might take us.	Keeps the audience engaged.

**Compare and Contrast** – answers may vary

**Zoom In** – answers may vary

**Transcript** – for teacher and student use

